

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ADDIS 03918 01 OF 02 060854Z
ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 EUR-12 IO-13 NEA-10 EB-08 ISO-00
HA-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11 COME-00
LAB-04 SIL-01 /127 W
-----121065 060903Z /10

R 060739Z SEP 78
FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9655
INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DJIBOUTI
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER
USMISSION USNATO
USINT HAVANA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 ADDIS ABABA 3918

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PDEV, PGOV, ET
SUBJECT: PREPARATIONS FOR ETHIOPIAN NEW YEARS, REVOLUTION DAY
AND INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY CONFERENCE OBSERVANCES
(SEPT 11-17,1978)

REFS: (A) ADDIS 2996 (B) ADDIS 3178

SUMMARY. ETHIOPIAN NEW YEAR'S DAY ON SEPT 11,
REVOLUTION DAY ON SEPT 12, AND SOLIDARITY CONFERENCE
BEGINNING SEPT 14 OBSERVANCES WILL OCCUPY MOST OF WEEK
OF SEPTEMBER 11. ON THE SCHEDULE ARE TWO MAJOR PARADES AND
A HUGE EXPOSITION. THE ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT AND CHAIRMAN
MENGISTU'S NAME AND TITLE ARE NOT LIKELY TO UNDERGO NAME
CHANGE AND IT NOW SEEMS UNLIKELY THAT THE FORMATION OF A
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PAGE 02 ADDIS 03918 01 OF 02 060854Z

MARXIST-LENINIST WORKERS' PARTY WILL BE ANNOUNCED. END SUMMARY.

1. PREPEARTIONS FOR REVOLUTION DAY (SEPT 12) HAVE
INCREASINGLY RIVETED THE ATTENTION OF THE PROVISIONAL
MILITARY GOVERNMENT OF SOCIALIST ETHIOPIA (PMGSE) FOR
SOME WEEKS (REFTEL A). THIS FOURTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE
REVOLUTION WILL BE CELEBRATED ON A LARGER SCALE THAN

PREVIOUS OBSERVANCES. THERE WILL BE A SEVEN HOUR, PRIMARILY CIVILIAN PARADE ON THE 12TH, FOLLOWED THE NEXT DAY BY A SIX TO SEVEN HOUR MILITARY PARADE. THE SOVIET AMBASSADOR TOLD THE AMBASSADOR THAT THE SOVIET DELEGATION TO THE FESTIVITIES WOULD BE HEADED BY V. V. KUSNETSOV OF THE SUPREME SOVIET. NO RECENT INDICATION HAS BEEN PICKED UP TO THE EFFECT THAT FIDEL CASTRO WOULD SHOW UP AS HAD BEEN WIDELY NOTED LOCALLY UNTIL A MONTH AGO.

2. THERE WILL BE A FOUR DAY "INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF SOLIDARITY WITH THE STRUGGLE OF AFRICAN AND ARAB PEOPLES AGAINST IMPERIALISM AND REACTION" BEGINNING ON THE 14TH (REFTEL B). OF THE 140 INVITED DELEGATIONS, 126 HAVE SUPPOSEDLY CONFIRMED.

3. THERE WILL BE A MONTH-LONG EXPOSITION DEDICATED TO ILLUSTRATING "THE STRUGGLE OF THE ETHIOPIAN MASSES AGAINST FEUDALISM" AND THEIR PROGRESS SINCE THE REVOLUTION. THIS EXPOSITION IS EXPECTED TO DRAW 500,000 VISITORS, AND WILL BE LOCATED DIRECTLY ACROSS THE STREET FROM THE EMBASSY, COMPLICATING OUR MOVEMENTS CONSIDERABLY. THE ALL ETHIOPIAN TRADE UNION (AETU) WILL ALSO PRESENT AN EXPOSITION ELSEWHERE ON THE STRUGGLE OF THE LABOR UNIONS DURING THE PRE-REVOLUTIONARY ERA.

4. WE NO LONGER EXPECT AN ANNOUNCEMENT ON REVOLUTION
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PAGE 03 ADDIS 03918 01 OF 02 060854Z

DAY OF THE FORMATION OF A "WORKERS' PARTY" AS WE HAD (PARA 2, REFTEL A). SUCH A "PARTY" ON THE EAST EUROPEAN MODEL HAS DROPPED OUT OF SIGHT IN THE PUBLIC MEDIA IN THE LAST THREE WEEKS. THE SOVIET AMBASSADOR, YUGOSLAV AMBASSADOR, AND EAST GERMAN POLITICAL COUNSELOR HAVE TOLD US THAT THEY DO NOT EXPECT THE FORMATION OF SUCH A PARTY. IT NOW SEEMS PROBABLE THAT THE PMGSE WILL CHOOSE THE INTERMEDIARY STEP OF ANNOUNCING THE MERGER OF THE MEMBER PARTIES (MALERID, REVOLUTIONARY FLAME AND LABOR LEAGUE) OF THE UNION OF ETHIOPIAN MARXIST-LENINIST PARTIES (EMELEDH), AS A PRELIMINARY STEP TO THE FORMATION OF A SINGLE MARXIST-LENINIST WORKERS' PARTY. ONE OF THE ORIGINAL FIVE PARTIES (MEISONE) HAS BEEN EXPELLED AND DESTROYED AND ANOTHER (ICHAT) HAS BEEN SUSPENDED.

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PAGE 01 ADDIS 03918 02 OF 02 060901Z
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 ADDIS ABABA 3918

5. SPECULATION WAS RIFE UNTIL A MONTH AGO ABOUT THE
POSSIBILITY OF A NAME CHANGE BOTH FOR THE PMGSE AND FOR
CHAIRMAN MENGISTU'S POSITION, REFLECTING A CHANGE AWAY FROM
THEIR CURRENT PROVISIONAL STATUS. WE HAVE BEEN FLATLY
INFORMED BY THE YUGOSLAV AMBASSADOR AND THE GDR POLITICAL
COUNSELOR THAT THIS WOULD NOT OCCUR. OTHER INDICATIONS PICKED
UP SERVE TO CORROBORATE THESE OPINIOS, AND, ON BALANCE,
WE NO LONGER EXPECT EITHER A NAME CHANGE FOR THE GOVERN-
MENT, A CHANGE IN TITLE FOR MENGISTU, OR ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE
FORMATION OF A WORKERS' PARTY AT THIS TIME (NOT
ALL VIEWS WITHIN THE EMBASSY ARE UNANIMOUS ON THIS POINT).

6. THE HEAVY EMPHASIS ON THE MILITARY DURING THE
CELEBRATIONS MAY BE A MORALE BOOSTING NAMEUVER. IT MAY
BE DESIGNED TO SHOW THE LOCAL POPULATION, WHOSE
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PAGE 02 ADDIS 03918 02 OF 02 060901Z

STANDARD OF LIVING HAS DECLINED VISIBLY, THAT THEIR
SACRIFICES ARE LEADING TO VICTORY AFTER VICTORY IN
ERITREA AND THAT THEY SHOULD LOOK TO THE "LIGHT AT THE
END OF THE TUNNEL", AND BETTER DAYS AHEAD IN THE RELATIVELY
NEAR FUTURE. KEREN, THE EPLF "CAPITAL", STILL REMAINS
OUT OF PMGSE HANDS AND THE SCALE OF FIGHTING AND OF
CASUALTIES REMAINS HIGH. PART OF THE PURPOSE BEHIND

THE EMPHASIS ON THE MILITARY MAY WELL BE TO BOOST MILITARY MORALE AS IT FACES DIFFICULT TASKS AHEAD BOTH IN ERITREA AND IN THE OGADEN. ON NEITHER FRONT DO THE PMGSE'S ENEMIES APPEAR TO BE BEATEN AND NEGOTIATIONS LEADING TO A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT APPEAR AS FAR AWAY AS EVER.

7. IT APPEARS THAT THE LACK OF MAJOR ANNOUNCEMENTS MAY BE COMPENSATED FOR PARTLY BY A SEARCH FOR SCAPEGOATS. ANTI-WESTERN PROPAGANDA HAS INCREASED RECENTLY AND THE PUBLIC, GOVERNMENT-OWNED MEDIA HAVE BEGUN TO STRESS REPORTS OF MEASURES TAKEN AGAINST "ECONOMIC SABOTEURS" AND COUNTER REVOLUTIONARIES (PROFITEERING MERCHANTS, TRUCK DRIVERS WHO WRECKED THEIR TRUCKS, CORRUPT OFFICIALS, ETC.) THE STRUGGLE TO INCREASE PRODUCTION IS NOW BEING EQUATED IN IMPORTANCE WITH "THE ARMED STRUGGLE TO DEFEND THE MOTHERLAND." THE INCREASED PROMINENCE DEVOTED TO ECONOMIC THEMES RECENTLY IS AS NOTICEABLE AS THE RISE IN TENSION, INCLUDING A RECENT ANTI-FOREIGN CAR STONING INCIDENT.

8. IF OUR ANALYSIS OF WHAT WILL OCCUR NEXT WEEK IS CORRECT, THE WEEK-LONG CELEBRATION WILL HAVE LITTLE SUBSTANTIVE CONTENT. IT WILL BE SOMETHING TO GET THROUGH, BOTH FOR THE PMGSE AND FOR THE EMBASSY. AFTER THE CELEBRATIONS, AND THE HEIGHTENED TENSIONS RESULTING FROM THEM, THE PMGSE WILL HAVE TO GET BACK TO BUSINESS AND

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PAGE 03 ADDIS 03918 02 OF 02 060901Z

ADDRESS THE DETERIORATING ECONOMIC SITUATION, CONSIDER WHAT IT WISHES TO DO ABOUT BETTER RELATIONS WITH WESTERN POSSIBLE AID DONORS, AND MAKE A NEW ANALYSIS OF WHETHER ITS PRESENT HARD LINE POLICIES IN ERITREA AND THE OGADEN ARE REALISTIC.
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